

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2019

Senator Joni Ernst

- Reauthorizes and robustly funds VAWA grant programs to prevent and respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, and support victims.
- Contains a number of bipartisan bills to address VAWA crimes throughout the country, including in rural areas and on tribal lands.
- Recognizes sex trafficking as a form of sexual assault.
- Holistically addresses the issue of female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C).
 - Includes the *Federal Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2019* (Blackburn) to amend the federal statute banning the practice of FGM/C to correct a constitutional defect, which will allow prosecutions of FGM/C to continue under federal law.
 - Increases penalties for FGM/C.
 - Creates a pilot program to prevent, detect, and intervene in communities vulnerable to the practice of FGM/C.
- Empowers victims of revenge pornography by enabling them to remove abusive images and videos from the internet using copyright takedown authority.
- Expands tribal criminal jurisdiction to protect the safety of Indian women, while also protecting the constitutional rights of all defendants.
- Requires prosecutor offices receiving VAWA grants to develop best practices on the use of bench warrants, body attachments, and material witness warrants for victims who fail to appear, based on national standards developed by experts in the fields of gender-based violence and national prosecution standards.
- Bolsters housing protections available to victims by authorizing a new emergency transfer demonstration program within the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- Improves upon current HUD funding priorities to ensure transitional housing is a more viable option for family violence victims (*Cornyn/Feinstein HEALS Act*).
- Creates an “innovation fund” for the Office on Violence Against Women to address emerging VAWA-related issues.
- Enhances criminal penalties for sexual abuse of a minor, sexual abuse of a ward, abusive sexual contact with a child under 12 years of age, and interstate domestic violence.
- Gives federal agencies the authority to remove an employee convicted of sexual assault or found to have committed such an offense by an administrative body while employed by the federal government (*Ernst/Cramer CREEPS Act*).
- Creates a new crime prohibiting an individual, acting under color of law, from engaging in a sexual act with someone who is under arrest or in detention and incentivizes states to do the same (*Blumenthal/Ernst Closing the Law Enforcement Consent Loophole Act of 2019*).